Letter No 52.   Monday - June 16.

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My darling sweetheart -

I have posted something to you on the 10th, 11th, 14th, 15th, & 16th (today) - & now here I am beginning another letter to you. I do hope to goodness you find my letters interesting, because sometimes I feel somewhat doubtful. During the voyage, there was so much of which to write - & then Cairo; & the battle for my majority - & telling you all about the Coy. But now, I have settled down into such a rut of not particularly thrilling work, & never have time to go anywhere, & so I can only just prattle on & hope for the best. You must surely be getting so many of my letters & things now, & I should hate to think of you being disappointed at all. Perhaps one is bound to feel this in such an unreal sort of correspondence from so far away in both time & space. You have apologised for your letters, but I hope you know by now that I love them & look forward to them as avidly as ever, & feel just as depressed every time there is a blank post. Everything you tell me about yourself is always interesting & just what I want to hear - & all the news about the coming baby & your plans & how you were feeling, was meat & drink to me. And when you tell me you love me & miss me & want me, & talk about our life together - I just drink that in with joy & thankfulness & read it over & over again.

But you must tell me, darling, about my letters, & let me know if there are any things you want to know & about which I do not tell you. There is one thing I asked you to do for me, & which you have not done, or else maybe your letter has not arrived - & that was to send me a bit of stuff off an old garment of yours, & put some of your scent on it & generally make it smell like you: I wish you would do this, please darling - even if you do think it is silly of me.

Your 11th letter came in today – Oct 23rd – nearly eight months – & by Air Mail too. Apart from that foul R.M.H.Q.R. etc business, I think the "attached Worcester Regt" did the most damage. It has been published & broadcasted now, that they were in the East African campaign – & so every one of those letters – & cables I never received, too, I suppose – have been around the Sudan & Abyssinia, before finally arriving at 2nd Echelon, who always know where any body really is. What a foul stroke of luck that was – & all caused by that incompetent unpleasant adjutant at Oswestry. This letter was mainly about your poor father's illness – & finished with a p.s. that he had died. Poor old man, he must have suffered those last few weeks, with all the worry & then being so ill. I wish I had written to your ma sooner than I did. And I hope by now my letter has arrived & that I said the right things. Your letter also told me about Kathleen having turned down that lot – my ma's letters told me all manner of bits of rather dull gossip, but not that piece of news which I should have liked to have heard. Yes, Sidney is pretty dull & scruffy – & rather too pleased with himself I always thought; & he always gives me the impression of being a bit slippy & not to be trusted too far, but maybe I am wrong there. It is a pity Kathleen could not have chosen someone a bit smarter & with more character & personality – because she is a bit scruffy herself, whereas if she had somebody who liked her to look pretty & smell nice & so on, she would make an effort in that direction. As it is, she seems to take a pride in looking hobbledehoy & somewhat dirty. My ma used to make a few efforts, but never went about it in the right way, & never dreamed of giving her a few pretty things to wear, or paying for her hair, or having a manicure or some such luxury. And whenever Patricia or Kathleen did make a bit of a dash, my father would invariably make one of his silly & rather unfortunate remarks, supposed to be funny, & which merely had the effect of embarrassing & discouraging them. I'm thankful that I was sufficiently vain to take no notice of the way my leg was pulled & I was made fun of, when I tried to keep abreast of fashion. I must admit that my idea of fashion was a bit exaggerated round about 1925 & 6 – but this was perhaps better than just not caring. I remember getting a hell of a rocket from Grannie one day, in Parker's in Manchester — she said it was all very well to have fancy socks & ties, "but go & clean your finger nails at once *before* you have lunch with me". I shot off down to the lav, feeling very small — & also thinking it was a bit hard, having spent the whole morning in clogs & overalls at Kerr & Hoegger, dyeing cotton.

Tuesday. June 17. No further word from you yet, darling. I had one thrill today, but it turned out to be a cable from Frost — congratulations & best of luck – which was very kind of him. You can imagine sweetheart, I am dying to have more news, to say that you are making a good recovery & feeling well & happy, & that the baby is doing well.

So my commission was 25%. It is difficult to say how it was split up among the other people — it would make me a bit sick to think of Willie getting twice what I get, when I consider just exactly how little he has had to do with it, quite unbelievably little. But at least, it may have the effect of making him pack up & retire & go & live in some hovel in Scotland with his poor unfortunate silly wife. Nor can I say whether Tiny's help made the difference or not. But, grateful as I do feel for the dough – I think it would have been pretty shabby if they had done nothing for us. Six years work & sweat for practically no commission at all, & then when things go a bit better, & I'm away at the blasted wars, to withhold it. That would have been pretty steep.

I wonder what our Income Tax amounts to now – on the new scale, & counting for the allowance for the baby – but not counting the Tax on commission. It must be a horrible figure. Our taxable income is now £845 p.a. – plus £174 allowances, marriage £110 & colonial £64 – so we are now on the four figure mark for the first time, at £1019 p.a.! Are we not well off, my darling? Taking a wild guess at the Income Tax, I think perhaps we may be able to save £20 a month, which would be quite useful, & with the commissions, should give us a good start off again after the war. By the way, I have now been an Acting Major for three months – so I now become a Temporary Major, & War Substantive Captain, & now cannot be a Lieutenant again.

It is terribly hot tonight, with all doors & windows shut, & I am quite wet with perspiration – & have to have a cloth under my right hand when writing, as I did when we were sailing up the coast of East Africa. What an age ago that seems, my darling – & how full of hopes I was in those days, about the possibilities of you coming out here to join me. Oh God — why were we ever such innocent, ignorant fools as to think that was possible. Had we only realised that there was no hope at all, & at that very time wives & families were being sent away from Egypt — I would have gone to the General, & unless he was a complete fool, he would have supported me & let me go to the 7th, & told that disgusting man to pick on someone else. Had I realised all this, & been able to see ourselves, thousands of miles apart, miserable & unhappy & hopeless — & know how utterly ghastly it is to be away from you, without hope or assurance as to when I shall see you again — I would have done anything, anything in the world not to come. Even to deserting, or pretending to lose my memory & getting lost in Liverpool until the boat had gone — or sticking my leg under a taxi & breaking it. Anything except leave you. The only possible comfort is, that it may all be for the best in the end, though goodness knows how.

I am still gazing longingly at the snap you sent to me from Bishops S. It's really a very pretty one, darling, & you have such a wistful, thoughtful expression — & your left hand across your right arm, is long & slender & delicate — & your legs look smooth & silky & adorable. I do hope you will not fail me, & will be photographed more, for me. Now darling sweet, you must not think me odd, or peculiar, or funny, or silly, or perverted, or anything else, & I'm sure you will not. But next time you are being photographed, could you please be rather careless with your skirts, & show me more of your lovely sweet legs, which I adore so much. Or even, if you had someone staying with you who you know well enough & who might understand — have a rather naughty one taken — & perhaps one or two in your pants — & quite easily some in a bathing costume. You do understand sweetheart, dont you? Day after day, I long for you & desire you, so much — I remember you so well darling, & all our glorious heavenly times together — it is agonising. And some really lovely photos like these would be so marvellous to have.

You were talking in your last letter about how heavenly it was to make love out of doors, on a sunny day. Of course I remember the haystack at Harrogate & the field near the golf course. How gorgeous you were. And do you remember that time in the car, on the road to Farley, was it? — I remember the road, but not the name. It's so wonderful, isn't it darling, to feel passion rising, irresistibly, like that, & in both of us. Lovely sweet kisses, & my hands on your soft, warm legs & thighs — & then your pants in my pocket — & then the sweetest, loveliest, most wonderful sensation in all the world. I remember so well, sweetest, dearest, every touch & feeling & sensation of you. Oh darling, you are the one & only one for me. I think so much of this part of our life together again. We must & will make up for all this missed & wasted time. When we meet again, I cannot imagine how we are going to stop talking & making love. I shall not want to, any way.

Oh Gosh - I wish this war would hurry up. Things seemed to be really shaping when the Italians were smashed up in the Western Desert & East Africa, & the Greeks were doing so well, & Jugo-Slavia gave Hitler the bird - but since then, things have changed. Rather inevitably, I think, & not to an extent to cause real concern. But it is all so long drawn out & interminable & so difficult to see the end. I'm afraid there is no such thing as Home leave, as you wrote about, darling. A limited number of people are sent home from time to time - but only on compassionate grounds, such as having been out here for many years - or having had air-raid casualties in the family. About the only hope for me would be if this job in this Coy were to come to an end, & I could exert enough influence to be transferred to one of our Home Bns. But that is pretty slender, I am afraid. There are so many other jobs going, out here, staff & so on. But I have decided, as I have been writing this letter, that I will write a long, appealing letter to Col. Owen; that is also a slender hope, I'm afraid, but I must try it. The one snag is, I heard a rumour that Zag may be losing his command. The only other alternative would be to write bloody Davenport, swallowing an enormous lump of pride, & tell him a long, sad story, & also how he had been gulled into sending out a machine gun officer, & what am I doing now. I will write to one or the other darling - but I'm afraid it has no earthly chance of coming off,

& so you must not build on it at all. I only wish we could.

Until tomorrow - goodnight - sweetest darling Barbara. XXX.

Wednesday. June 18th. Darling one - your No. 37 of Apr 7th arrived today - I already having had your unnumbered one of April 16th. It was a marvellous letter to have, on account of the sweet & loving things you said to me. But it also made me almost cry with sorrow & anguish, to hear again how concerned & worried you were about the birth, & - unnecessarily - about me. Poor, sweet darling - I think you have been very brave - having so much to face, all by yourself, & realising so vividly, as you were bound to do, all you stood to lose & to gain. If you had had Lisa with you, how utterly different everything would have been. You must try not to worry about me, my darling. Of course, I am thankful & grateful, in a way, that you do. But I am in about as safe a job as I well could be, & providing Palestine is not actually invaded, there is very little to worry about. And even if the Germans did come, I should be very much safer than most people, really & truly, darling. And apart from those facts, I still feel very confident about our future - that nothing can or will happen to either of us. You must try & feel the same darling - I hope you will now that the baby is safely born. The only thing, as always, is how long it is going to be. Your letter was wonderful, my sweetheart, in the way you told me how you loved me & thought always of me, & that you could never love anyone but me. Dearest one, how I thrill to read that, & I have read your letter four times today already since lunch time. Not one ounce of our love & affection & tenderness is wasted, because I want & need all & every morsel of it. And you, sweetest, from so far away, my love of you, my passion for you & my memories of you, & my missing of you & longing for you – these are the complete answer & complement of my love & affection. Nobody else & nothing else can break in, even for a moment. I was thinking this morning, that instead of my weakening at all in my memory & love of you, as time passes, it is exactly the opposite. And I do, without any doubt, love & adore & cherish you more & more – you occupy ever more of my thoughts & mind – & instead of becoming used to being away from you, I miss you ever more actively & painfully. Under these conditions, you will understand darling – won't you – that it is impossible for anything or anybody to come between us in any way at all. And I have proved my love for you? – that it is deep, & sincere, & completely enduring, & understanding & passionate & sympathetic. I do hope I have done, & in all those ways, my darling. There must be some prize & reward for us Barbara dearest – don't you feel that? I could go on writing forever, about loving you.

I finished off the roll of photographs today – took them in to be developed & printed this evening – & they will be ready tomorrow, & I will send them off in my next letter in a few days time. I do hope they will be some good – there are 36 in a roll.

I loved hearing about your new dresses & pants & things – they all sound very pretty & I hope you will tell me more about these when you begin wearing them – & will tell me about any others you get. I will send you some more nighties, darling – I love doing it, you know, & I should think they would be very useful at this time. I think I am going to see Col. Leicester on Sunday & if I do, I will go to Tel-Aviv afterwards & do some shopping there; they have prettier things, I believe, there, & cheaper too, than in this place. And that will be my present to you too, on the baby's birthday. And I will sleep with them, of course, before I send them to you.

And what news have I, about myself. My tummy is almost better, thank goodness, on account of the intensive treatment. I hope this will not happen again.

Your last p.c. said you were delighted to hear about the advent of Peter. He is fine, & his ears have now healed up v. well, & he really looks much better, & they keep much cleaner this way. His character is not unlike Michael's – the jaunty, independent way he walks about, & nods & smiles at everybody. But, unlike Michael, he sticks around v. well. If I am sitting, in my room, or office, he will not come in & settle down – but if I move off anywhere, he is beside me in no time at all – & will not dream of allowing me out of his sight. He is really a very pleasant little dog – & as fit as a flea.

Do please keep on writing to me as much as you possibly can, darling – I simply live for your letters.

Goodbye, my dearest, darling, sweetest, beloved Barbara – many, many, long passionate kisses & hugs & caresses, on your darling mouth, & all over my darling wife. – & love & a big kiss to the boy. Always your Harry. xxxxxxxx.

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Mrs. H. Massey.
Carseland -
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J. H. Massey.